
Compliance and Effectiveness Monitoring Report

Limited Use Area Vernon Unit, Calcasieu Ranger District Kisatchie National Forest



**U.S. Army, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, Louisiana
and
U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Kisatchie National Forest, Louisiana**

with Technical Assistance from

**Quantitative Ecological Services, Inc.
Under URS Corporation Contract DACA56-01-G-0001**

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To our Friends of the Kisatchie National Forest and Fort Polk:

We are pleased to present the first annual Compliance and Effectiveness Monitoring Report for the Limited Use Area (LUA) of the Vernon Unit, Calcasieu Ranger District, of the Kisatchie National Forest. This report summarizes accomplishments toward implementation of increased military training use of the LUA and describes measures to minimize potential adverse effects on the biological, physical, cultural and socio-economic environment. Increased military use of the LUA and related measures to mitigate environmental effects – including continued compliance and effectiveness monitoring – were approved on September 22, 2002, based on the results of a thorough environmental analysis process, Army and Forest Service review, and input from the public.

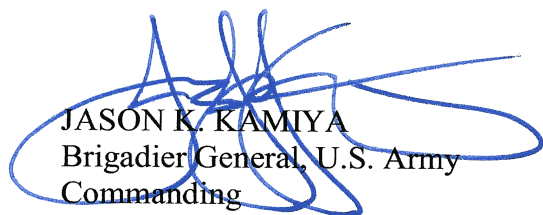
The mitigation and monitoring accomplishments described in this report represent the cooperative work by many Army and Forest Service employees. These accomplishments and an environmentally sensitive approach to military use of the LUA underscore the commitment of both agencies to sound environmental stewardship, multiple use management of public lands, and a policy of being “good neighbors” to surrounding residents and communities.

We will continue to keep you informed as we work closely together to monitor the effects of military use of the LUA and its valuable natural resources. Your thoughts on these matters are important to us. If you have questions or comments regarding plans for military use of the LUA or mitigation and monitoring activities, please contact us and let us know.

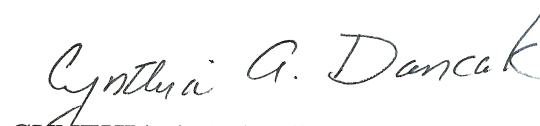
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Sincerely,



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Executive Summary

This report is prepared by the U.S. Army, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk (Army) and the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Kisatchie National Forest (Forest Service). It presents the fiscal year (FY) 2001 activities and results of the site-level Compliance and Effectiveness Monitoring (CEM) program for the Limited Use Area (LUA) of the Vernon Unit, Calcasieu District of the Kisatchie National Forest.

The CEM Report is prepared in accordance with conditions specified in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Decision Notice signed by the Forest Supervisor on September 22, 2000, authorizing increased military training use of the LUA. The report also fulfills annual monitoring and reporting requirements specified in the Army's Special Use Permit/Operating Plan for the LUA, as amended, which details terms and conditions for military use of the LUA.

The CEM Report is used by Army and Forest Service officials to evaluate compliance with the terms and conditions of the Special Use Permit/Operating Plan and to determine if increased military use of the LUA is having unexpected or unacceptable effects on the natural or human environment. It is also a public document that provides information on these matters to individuals and organizations with an interest in the Army's use of the Forest.

The LUA has been divided into two categories of training areas: Level 1 training areas, in which six new training activities may be conducted; and Level 2 training areas, in which only historically approved training activities may be conducted. The six new training activities are being implemented on a training area-by-area basis as required mitigation measures for resource protection, management, public information and safety are implemented. As of the report date, one of the six new training activities – use of pyrotechnic devices and artillery simulators – has been approved in Level 1 training areas.

Compliance monitoring items are organized into nine program areas identified in the Special Use Permit/Operating Plan for the LUA. These are:

- General Operating Procedures
- Public Awareness of Military Training
- Training Area Maintenance and Upgrades
- Environmental Compliance Training and Regulations
- Fire Control and Response Measures
- Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Management
- Areas Off-Limits to Military Training
- Area Restrictions
- Site-Level Monitoring Plan

Monitoring items under each program area are described in terms of their linkage to the LUA EA, compliance questions to be answered, compliance indicators, implementation requirements, compliance status and results, and recommended actions for the next reporting period.

COMPLIANCE MONITORING RESULTS

General Operating Procedures. This program area consists of five monitoring items designed to evaluate the Army's compliance with general procedures for scheduling of training and non-training activities in the LUA. No conflicts between military and non-military activities or areas of non-compliance with program compliance were noted for this reporting period; however, necessary record-keeping procedures have not been fully implemented for all monitoring items. Recommendations for the



next monitoring period include continued implementation of monitoring items, with additional record-keeping procedures for the following: exceptions to the 14-day LUA training schedule lock-in; tracking of potential scheduling conflicts between training and non-training activities; and the status (open/closed) of LUA training areas and sub-areas of the Fort Polk Wildlife Management Area for hunting during opening weekends for specified hunting seasons.

Public Awareness of Military Training. This program area consists of six monitoring items. These items are designed to provide current and accurate information to the public on training activities in the LUA using a variety of media, and to provide means for the Army and Forest Service to respond in a timely manner to complaints and concerns received from the public. Three monitoring items were implemented according to program requirements during this reporting period: operation of a Complaint Hotline and 24-hour response, and posting of training maps on information kiosks within the LUA. Additional monitoring and record-keeping recommendations were noted for the information kiosks. Three monitoring items under this program are under development: an information hotline operated by the Army (Range Control); a web site for information on LUA training schedules; and an information hotline operated by the Forest Service. Recommendations for development and implementation of these three items were noted for the next reporting period.

Training Area Maintenance and Upgrades. This program area consists of five monitoring items to identify and correct damages to LUA natural resources due to military maneuvers; improve and repair LUA roads to support military traffic; and mark private property boundaries in the LUA to minimize accidental military intrusion. Compliance with program requirements occurred for each of the five monitoring items. Progress toward implementation included: initial development of a maneuver damage tracking system; preparation of baseline road condition inventories; resurfacing of about 11.7 miles of LUA roads, and refurbishment of 30.5 miles of LUA property boundary lines. Recommendations were given for ongoing implementation during the next reporting period.

Environmental Compliance Training and Regulations. This program area includes three monitoring items designed to promote military unit compliance with environmental regulations and restrictions specific to the LUA. Implementation of each of these monitoring items is ongoing. Recommendations were made for completion of updates to the installation's regulation governing military operations within maneuver and range areas (JRTC and FP Regulation 385-1); development of additional indicators of success for certification of soldiers to train in the LUA; and continued updates to environmental training materials and guidance documents during the next reporting period.

Fire Control and Response Measures. This program area consists of a monitoring item for fire control and response. Compliance with program requirements and progress toward completion occurred for this item, including preparation of a fire prevention and response plan, evaluation of fire hazards, and refurbishment of almost 49 miles of fire lines. Continued implementation was recommended for the next reporting period.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) Management. This program area consists of nine monitoring items to promote cooperative Army and Forest Service demographic monitoring, enable consistent data management and analysis, protect and maintain cluster resources, and minimize potential adverse effects to the RCW. Compliance with program requirements was achieved for each monitoring item. Progress included: completion of initial requirements for cluster maintenance (fuel removal, painting and signing of cavity and cluster boundary trees); digital mapping of Vernon Unit cavity trees; development of standard procedures for Forest Service access to clusters during military training exercises; development and implementation of a standardized system for collection, storage, analysis and reporting of RCW demographic and management data; signage of access roads to "remote" RCW clusters to minimize military intrusion; implementation of a joint Army-Forest Service monitoring plan for the Vernon-Fort



Polk RCW population; cooperative Army and Forest Service population management; and initiation of increased use in the fall of the year to minimize novel disturbance to the birds during breeding season. Recommendations were for continued implementation during the next reporting period.

Areas Off-Limits to Military Training. This program area consists of seven monitoring items for identification and protection of environmentally sensitive areas, developed recreation areas and other facilities in the LUA. Compliance and progress toward implementation was achieved for each of the monitoring items. Progress included: delineation, digital mapping, and protective boundary marking of bogs in the LUA; completion of Level 1 cultural resource surveys for approximately 47 percent of the survey area; completion of Level 2 cultural resource testing for 70 sites eligible or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; protective boundary marking of 26 cultural resource sites; and joint Army-Forest Service evaluation of potential stream crossing points. Recommendations for the next reporting period included evaluation of the need for protective boundary signage at Fullerton Mill Historic Site; evaluation of pipeline crossing points; and initiation of further environment analyses for potential construction of hardened stream crossing points.

Area Restrictions. This program area consists of seven monitoring items to minimize potential impacts to various natural resources and recreational facilities occurring in the LUA or to address safety concerns associated with specific training activities. Several monitoring items in this program area are under development, including training guidance and restrictions for blackout driving, use of the LUA by Louisiana Army National Guard Units, and avoidance of maintained recreational trails; regulations or policies for convoy operations in the LUA to avoid conflicts with school buses; removal of inactive grazing allotment fences; and resource management needs for reclassification of the Big Branch Trail for motorized use (non-military). Recommendations for progress and continued implementation in each of these areas were provided for the next reporting period.

Site Level Monitoring Plan. This program area requires preparation of an annual monitoring report to document the Army's compliance with mitigation measures in the LUA and the effectiveness of those measures. This CEM report constitutes fulfillment of that requirement for FY 2001. Because mitigation and monitoring program requirements and implementation of increased military use of the LUA are in early stages, this report contains only compliance monitoring results. Initiation of effectiveness monitoring is recommended for the next reporting period.

FISCAL YEAR 2002 ACTION PLAN

Procedures, goals and objectives for the FY 2002 reporting period (October 1, 2001 – September 30, 2002) include:

- A. Joint Army and Forest Service quarterly in-progress review;
- B. Development and validation of funding requirements for mitigation and monitoring items;
- C. Implementation of new training activities in accordance with schedules and plans;
- D. Initiation of effectiveness monitoring; and
- E. Development of area closure calendar for Joint Readiness Training Center rotations planned to occur in FY 2003.



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1. Introduction

AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

This report presents a summary of the activities and results of the site-level compliance and effectiveness monitoring (CEM) program for the Limited Use Area (LUA) of the Vernon Unit, Calcasieu District of the Kisatchie National Forest. It also presents strategies and timelines for the orderly implementation of increased military training use of the LUA by the US Army, Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) and Fort Polk, Louisiana, along with implementation of resource protection, management, public information and safety measures.

This report is prepared in accordance with the LUA Monitoring Plan (Appendix L) contained in the *Environmental Assessment for Increased Military Training Use of the Vernon Unit, Calcasieu Ranger District, Kisatchie National Forest* (“LUA EA”) prepared by the US Army (Army) and USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) and with the associated *Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact* signed by the Forest Supervisor on September 22, 2000. It also fulfills annual monitoring and reporting requirements specified in the Army’s Special Use Permit, as amended, which authorizes use of national forest lands for military training. The Special Use Permit was originally issued by the Forest Service to the Army in 1992 and was most recently amended on September 26, 2001 to add an Operating Plan for the LUA.

The purpose of the CEM report is several-fold. First, it is reviewed by Army and Forest Service officials to determine if increased military use of the LUA is proceeding in compliance with the Special Use Permit/Operating Plan referenced above. The results of the CEM are also reviewed by Army and Forest Service staff and resource specialists to determine if increased military use of the LUA is having unexpected or unacceptable effects on the natural or human environment. These reviews provide the basis for future planning and decision-making as part of an adaptive management program. Lastly, the CEM provides information to the public on the Army’s compliance with Special Use Permit/Operating Plan conditions and on the effectiveness of mitigation measures identified in the LUA EA to minimize or avoid adverse effects on the natural and human environment potentially resulting from increased military use of the LUA.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

Section 2 of the CEM presents a map of designated LUA training areas and describes approved training activities.

Section 3 presents an expected schedule for implementing increased military training in the LUA.

Section 4 documents compliance monitoring activities and results for the period September 22, 2000 – September 30, 2001. This section is organized by program area to correspond with the format of the Army’s Special Use Permit/Operating Plan for the LUA. Monitoring items under each program area are described as follows:

- The item being monitored and its linkage to the LUA EA and Monitoring Plan;
- The compliance question to be answered;
- The compliance indicator or measurement;
- The implementation strategy, responsibility or frequency of measure;
- The compliance status, results and accomplishments; and
- Recommended actions for the next monitoring and reporting period.



Section 5 presents activities and monitoring practices planned for the next reporting period (October 1, 2001 – September 30, 2002).

REPORT PREPARERS

This report was prepared by the Army and Forest Service with technical assistance from Quantitative Ecological Services, Inc., under sub-contract to the URS Corporation. Compliance monitoring results contained in this report represent monitoring activities conducted by both the Army and Forest Service.

2. Limited Use Area Training Areas

Figure 2-1 shows LUA training areas approved for the Army's use in accordance with the LUA EA and in the Special Use Permit/Operating Plan described in Section 1 above. Two categories of LUA training areas have been established: Level 1 training areas, in which six new military training activities may be conducted; and Level 2 training areas, in which only historically approved training activities may be conducted.

Level 1 training areas include Johnsonville 1-4, Flatwoods 1-2, Rustville 1-4, and Pitkin 1-2. New military training activities approved for these areas consist of: (1) cross-country vehicle movement, (2) blackout driving, (3) use of pyrotechnic devices and artillery simulators, (4) construction of hasty/limited defensive positions, (5) emplacement of obstacles, and (6) establish forward/rear support areas and field hospitals. In addition to these new activities, the Army is permitted to conduct a list of 29 historically approved training events. A description of the six new training activities and a list of the 29 historically approved training events are provided in Appendices A and B, respectively. New military training activities will be phased into use within Level 1 training areas as described in Section 3.

Level 2 training areas include Providence, Marlow 1-4 and Cravens. To minimize or avoid potential adverse effects to residents, private properties and sensitive environmental resources interspersed within these training areas, only 29 historically approved military training events are permitted in these areas. These training events have been evaluated and determined to have minimal effects on the natural and human environment.

3. Implementation Plan

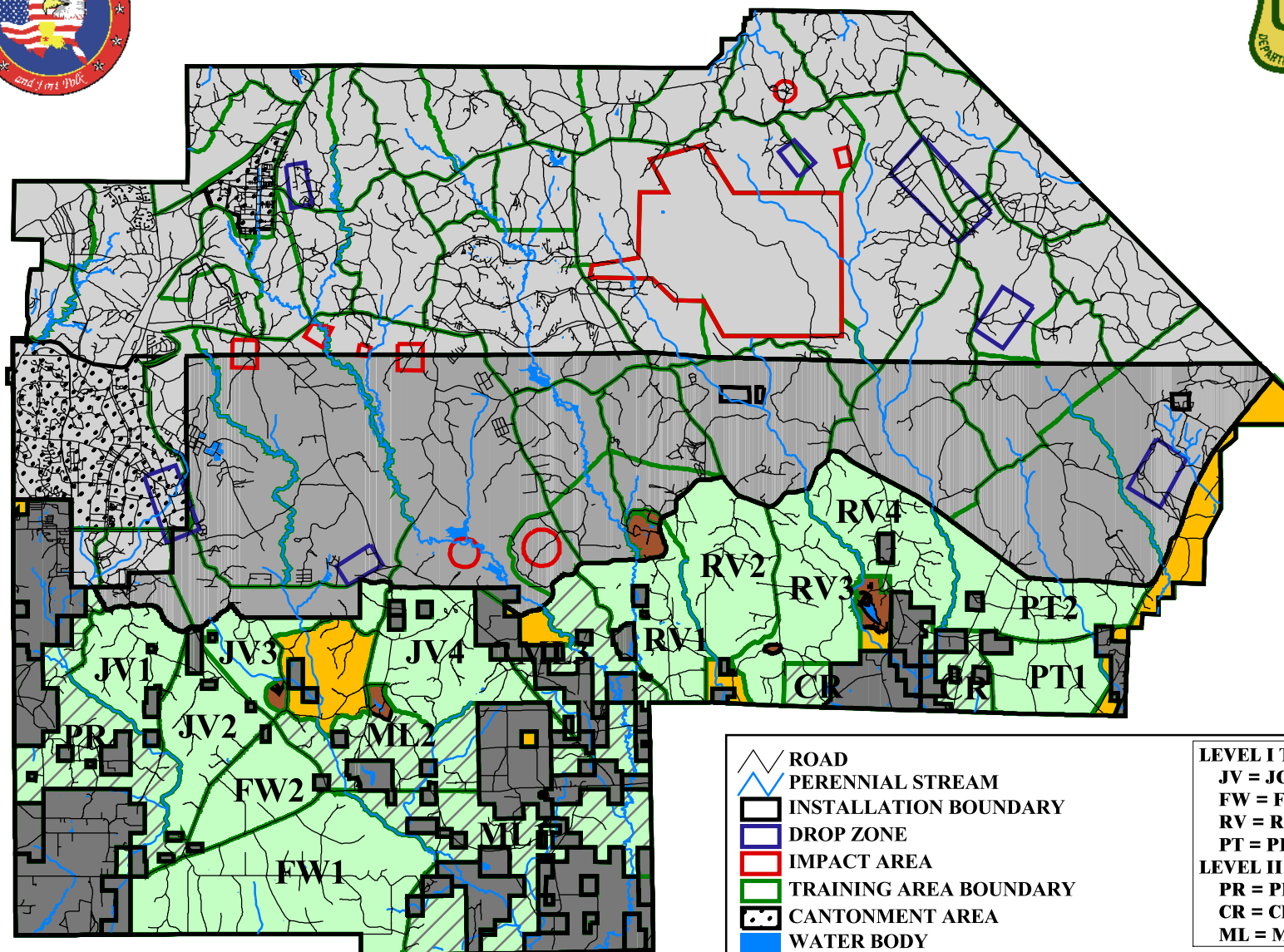
The Army and Forest Service have developed a plan for implementing increased military training use of the LUA based on training priorities and the terms of the LUA EA, Decision Notice, and the Army's Special Use Permit/Operating Plan for the LUA. The six new training activities will be implemented in phases on a training area-by-area basis as required mitigation measures for resource protection, management, public information and safety are implemented.

Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2 show the projected schedule for implementing increased use of the LUA by training area and fiscal year (FY), respectively. Implementation began as of October 1, 2001, with approval of new Level 1 and Level 2 training areas. Increased training use was begun in the fall of the year to allow adequate time for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) to acclimate to increased training activities prior to the nesting season.

Use of pyrotechnic devices and artillery simulators was also approved as of October 1, 2001, in the Rustville 2 and 3 training areas, followed by approval in Rustville 1 and 4 as of January 1, 2002, and



FIGURE 2-1. LIMITED USE AREA TRAINING AREAS



- ROAD
- PERENNIAL STREAM
- INSTALLATION BOUNDARY
- DROP ZONE
- IMPACT AREA
- TRAINING AREA BOUNDARY
- CANTONMENT AREA
- WATER BODY
- RECREATION AREA (OFF-LIMITS TO TRAINING)
- OFF-LIMITS TO TRAINING
- ARMY-OWNED LAND
- PRIVATE LAND
- FOREST SERVICE INTENSIVE USE AREA

- FOREST SERVICE LIMITED USE AREA
- LEVEL I TRAINING AREA
- LEVEL II TRAINING AREA

- LEVEL I TRAINING AREAS**
- JV = JOHNSONVILLE
- FW = FLATWOODS
- RV = RUSTVILLE
- PT = PITKIN
- LEVEL II TRAINING AREAS**
- PR = PROVIDENCE
- CR = CRAVENS
- ML = MARLOW



TRAINING ACTIVITY	Training Areas Approved for New Activities (Level 1 TAs)				Training Areas Approved for 29 Historic Events (Level 2 TAs)		
	Johnsonville	Flatwoods	Rustville	Pitkin	Providence	Marlow	Cravens
29 recurrent training events (historically approved)	1 QTR FY02	1 QTR FY02	1 QTR FY02	1 QTR FY02	1 QTR FY02	1 QTR FY02	1 QTR FY02
New Activities							
Cross-country maneuver (excluding stream crossing)	1 QTR FY03	2 QTR FY03	4 QTR FY02	1 QTR FY03	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stream crossings* (permitted at approved sites only)	FY04 and later	FY04 and later	FY04 and later	FY04 and later	N/A	N/A	N/A
Blackout driving	4 QTR FY02	4 QTR FY02	4 QTR FY02	4 QTR FY02	N/A	N/A	N/A
Use of pyrotechnics and artillery simulators	JV 1, 2 & 4 - 2 QTR FY02; JV 3 - 1 QTR FY03	2 QTR FY02	RV 2 & 3 - 1 QTR FY02; RV 1 & 4 - 2 QTR FY02	2 QTR FY02	N/A	N/A	N/A
Limited digging (e.g., 1-2 man positions)	1 QTR FY03	2 QTR FY03	4 QTR FY02	1 QTR FY03	N/A	N/A	N/A
Use of obstacles (concertina wire, simulated mines)	4 QTR FY02	4 QTR FY02	4 QTR FY02	4 QTR FY02	N/A	N/A	N/A
Establishment of forward/ rear support areas and field hospitals	1 QTR FY03	2 QTR FY03	4 QTR FY02	1 QTR FY03	N/A	N/A	N/A

Figure 3-1. Projected Timeline for Implementation of New Training Activities By Training Area. Approval status: Red = activity not currently approved in training area; Amber = activity approved in portion of training area; Green = activity approved throughout training area; Gray = 29 historic events approved only. Text in red, amber and green boxes indicates time period when approval for activity was given or is expected to occur. Codes for Level 1 Training Areas (Approved for New Activities): JV=Johnsonville, FW=Flatwoods, RV=Rustville, PT=Pitkin. Codes for Level 2 Training Areas (Approved for 29 Recurrent Events): PR=Providence, ML=Marlow, CR=Cravens. Projections current as of June 24, 2002. Schedule is contingent on fulfillment of NEPA, mitigation and monitoring requirements and receipt of funds.

*Crossing of streams by military vehicles is deferred until appropriate crossing sites have been identified and crossing structures have been constructed. Construction of stream crossing structures will be analyzed in the Army-Forest Service *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Force Transformation and Mission Capability Enhancements, JRTC and Fort Polk, and Long-term Military Training Use of Kisatchie National Forest Lands*. Pending completion of the EIS, construction of crossings would begin in FY04 and be completed in subsequent fiscal years.



TRAINING ACTIVITY	FY 02				FY 03				FY 04			
	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr
	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
29 recurrent training events (historically approved)	PR, ML, CR											
New Activities												
Cross-country vehicle maneuver (excluding stream crossing)				RV	JV, PT	FW						
Stream crossings * (permitted at approved sites only)									JV, FW, RV, PT			
Blackout driving				JV, FW, RV, PT								
Use of pyrotechnics and artillery simulators	RV 2&3	RV 1&4, PT, FW, JV 1&4			JV 2 & 3							
Limited digging (e.g., 1-2 man positions)				RV	JV, PT	FW						
Use of obstacles (concertina wire, simulated mines)				JV, FW, RV, PT								
Establishment of forward/rear support areas and field hospitals				RV	JV, PT	FW						

Figure 3-2. Projected Timeline for Implementation of LUA New Training Activities By Fiscal Year. Green boxes indicate time period when approval for activity was given or is expected to occur for training areas identified. Codes for Level 1 Training Areas (Approved for New Activities): JV=Johnsonville, FW=Flatwoods, RV=Rustville, PT=Patkin. Codes for Level 2 Training Areas (Approved for 29 Recurrent Events): PR=Providence, ML=Marlow, CR=Cravens. Projections current as of June 24, 2002. Schedule is contingent on fulfillment of NEPA, mitigation and monitoring requirements and receipt of funds.

*Crossing of streams by military vehicles is deferred until appropriate crossing sites have been identified and crossing structures have been constructed. Construction of stream crossing structures will be analyzed in the Army-Forest Service Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Force Transformation and Mission Capability Enhancements, JRTC and Fort Polk, and Long-term Military Training Use of Kisatchie National Forest Lands. Pending completion of the EIS, construction of crossings would begin in FY04 and be completed in subsequent fiscal years.



approval in Johnsonville 1 and 4, Flatwoods 1 and 2, and Pitkin 1 and 2 training areas as of April 1, 2002. Approval for the use of pyrotechnics and artillery simulators in these areas was made possible by completion of the necessary fire control and response measures (see Sections 4.5 below) and development of a noise monitoring network in the LUA. Approval for the use of pyrotechnics and artillery simulators in additional LUA training areas is planned for Fall 2002 (first quarter FY 2003) pending evaluation and maintenance of existing firelines.

Based on Army and Forest Service timelines for implementing necessary mitigation measures, approvals are projected to occur through the second quarter of FY 2003 for a majority of the six new training activities. Because the Army has identified the Rustville training area as having the highest priority for increased use, most environmental protection measures and new training activities will be implemented first in the Rustville area. The Army's next priority for increased use is the Pitkin training area, followed by the Johnsonville and Flatwoods areas.

The final training activity scheduled for approval is vehicle crossing of streams and wetlands. Although crossing of streams and wetlands was not separately identified among the six new training activities, this activity is an element of cross-country vehicle movement (new activity no. 1). Crossing of streams and wetlands by military vehicles will be deferred until the Army and Forest Service have identified suitable crossing sites and have completed appropriate site-specific environmental analyses (see Section 4.7.F. below).

The schedules for implementing increased use of the LUA shown in *Figure 3-1* and *Figure 3-2* are current as of June 24, 2002. The schedules are intended to be tools for Army and Forest Service planners as well as indicators for measuring progress toward accomplishment of mitigation requirements. They will be updated routinely based on the status of mitigation measures and current Army training priorities.

4. Compliance Monitoring Results

This section documents the status of LUA compliance monitoring items from September 22, 2000 – September 30, 2001. Compliance monitoring items are organized into nine program areas identified in the Army's Special Use Permit/Operating Plan for the LUA. The monitoring item number listed to the right of each item refers to the LUA monitoring plan and indicates the mitigation measure number assigned in the LUA EA.

4.1. GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. Training Schedule Lock-In (Monitoring Item No. 1)

- *Compliance Question:* Are schedules for training finalized 14 days in advance?
- *Compliance Indicator:* G3/Range Control records/exception reports.
- *Implementation:* Commander – Issue policy statement on 14-day schedule lock-in. Range Control – Retain copy of Command policy and record exceptions.
- *Status:* Current Command policy states that training schedules must be finalized 14 days prior to the event. Tracking of exceptions in the LUA will begin with the next reporting period.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period.



B. Special Events Scheduling (Monitoring Item No. 11)

- *Compliance Question:* Are special recreation events in the LUA such as Enduro races and nature studies/tours scheduled in advance by the Forest Service at monthly Resource Allocation Conferences (RACs)? Are Forest Service sponsored requests for access to the LUA for educational and research purposes accommodated at the RACs, where possible?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Scheduling records, records of Forest Service requests, and/or records of occurrence of recreational/ educational/ research events in the LUA.
- *Implementation:* Forest Service Military Liaison Officer (MLO) – Tabulate requests made at RACs for scheduling of special events, tours, research work, etc. in the LUA. Note proposed date(s) for each event and indicate whether event was accommodated. When events are not accommodated, note nature of conflict. Retain records.
- *Status:* Special events occurring in the LUA during this reporting period included the Enduro motorbike race held in April 2001 and the Bogs and Birds Tour held in May 2001 (see Figure 4-1). No conflicts between recurring military activities (29 historically approved training events) and non-training activities in the LUA were noted for this period. Tracking of potential scheduling conflicts between increased military training exercises and recreational events, tours, and other non-training activities in the LUA will begin with the next reporting period.



Figure 4-1. The annual Enduro motorbike race and Bogs and Birds Tour are popular recreational events in the LUA.



- *Recommended Action:*
Continue implementation of this measure.

C. Access for Oil and Gas Operations (Monitoring Item No. 41)

- *Compliance Question:* Are training exercises in the LUA scheduled/coordinated to provide access for oil and gas exploration and development in accordance with existing Forest Service lease agreements? Do future lease agreements include Surface Use Occupancy Stipulations to minimize conflicts with training?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Copies of future lease agreements or standard surface use occupancy stipulation for the LUA (to be prepared and retained as needed).
- *Implementation:* G3/Range Control/Operations Group/Forest Service – Schedule training exercises/plan rotations to avoid conflicts with oil and gas operations on Forest Service lands permitted under existing lease agreements (pre-decision). Resolve scheduling conflicts at RACs. *Forest Service* – Include Surface Use Occupancy Stipulations in subsequent (post-decision) lease agreements for the Vernon Unit to avoid conflicts with military training exercises.



- *Status:* No new oil and gas leasing or development activity occurred on the Vernon Unit during this reporting period. No conflicts between recurring military activities (29 historically approved training events) and oil and gas operations were noted.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure as needed during the next reporting period.

D. Logging Contracts (Monitoring Item No. 36)

- *Compliance Question:* Are training exercises scheduled to avoid conflicts with existing (pre-decision) logging contracts in the LUA? Are subsequent logging contracts coordinated to avoid conflicts with area closures for JRTC exercises in the LUA?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Occurrence of scheduling conflicts or disruption of logging operations due to training exercises. Copies of future timber sales contracts/standard contract provisions requiring logging operations to be coordinated with military activities in the LUA.
- *Implementation:* G3/Range Division/Operations Group/Forest Service – Schedule training exercises/plan rotations to avoid logging operations for existing timber sales (pre-decision). Schedule logging operations to avoid JRTC rotations (post-decision). Resolve scheduling conflicts at RACs. Forest Service – Develop standard contract language requiring logging operations to be coordinated with military activities in the LUA.
- *Status:* During this reporting period, an active timber sale was ongoing in Compartment 108 of the Vernon Unit, which is located in the Flatwoods training area. No closures of this area occurred as a result of military training exercises. No conflicts between military activities and the timber removal operations were noted.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period.

E. Deer Gun Season and Other Opening Weekend Hunts (Monitoring Item No. 8)

- *Compliance Question:* Are training exercises scheduled in the LUA during deer gun season (modern firearms)? Are home station training exercises scheduled in the LUA during opening weekends for turkey or squirrel season? Are areas on the main post open for hunting on opening weekends for deer and turkey, if they are not in use for JRTC exercises?
- *Compliance Indicator:* G3/Range Division training schedule records (Fort Polk and LUA) and copies of hunting maps for Fort Polk Wildlife Management Area (WMA).
- *Implementation:* Range Division – Tabulate hunting status (open/closed) for LUA training areas and Fort Polk WMA during applicable hunting seasons and opening weekends. For WMA, indicate which of the training areas not reserved for JRTC are open for hunting during opening weekends for deer and turkey seasons. Retain records.
- *Status:* Opening weekend dates for LUA (Area 3) and Fort Polk WMA squirrel, deer gun, and turkey hunting seasons during the October 1, 2000 – September 30, 2001 reporting period are shown in Table 4-1. Complete records of the hunting status for LUA training areas and the Fort Polk WMA were unavailable for these dates. Available records indicate that at least one training exercise was scheduled for October 7-8, 2000 in the LUA; however, no LUA training areas were closed to hunting during the reporting period. Available records show that only minimal home station or JRTC training exercises were scheduled on October 28-29, 2000, on the Fort Polk WMA, but records indicating the extent of closures during opening weekends for deer gun and turkey hunting were not available.



Table 4-1. Opening Weekends and Area Closures for Selected Hunting Seasons on the LUA and Fort Polk WMA

Season	LUA Dates (Area 3)	Areas Closed For Military Training	Fort Polk WMA Dates	Areas Closed for Military Training
Squirrel	October 7-8, 2000	None	Not Evaluated	Not Evaluated
Deer Gun (modern firearms)	October 14-15, 2000	None	October 28-29, 2000	Undetermined
Turkey	March 24, 2001	None	April 22, 2001	Undetermined

- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period. Establish improved record-keeping procedures for hunting status data.

4.2. PUBLIC AWARENESS OF MILITARY TRAINING

A. Training Area Maps (Monitoring Item No. 2)

- *Compliance Question:* Are maps posted in the LUA showing areas where training exercises are scheduled? Do the maps properly identify areas and time periods in the LUA that are open for co-use or closed to the public? Are the maps current and do they project training schedules five or more days in advance?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Posted maps and Range Division training area schedules (for comparison/verification purposes).
- *Implementation:* Range Control/Provost Marshall – Produce and post maps in LUA each week. Forest Service MLO/Environmental and Natural Resources Management Division (ENRMD) staff – Conduct periodic (monthly or quarterly) check of accuracy/completeness of maps and record. Interview Range staff as needed. Note any problems during previous time period.
- *Status:* Maps identifying areas scheduled for recurrent military training exercises (29 historically approved events) were regularly posted on information kiosks in the LUA during this reporting period.
- *Recommended Action:* Update maps to reflect new training area boundaries and continue implementation of this measure during next reporting period. Initiate monitoring of kiosks to verify posting of training schedule maps.

B. Information Hotline (Monitoring Item No. 4)

- *Compliance Question:* Is a toll free number available (provided by the Army) for information on public access and military training in the LUA? Is the number listed in directory services and is it regularly published in local newspapers?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Working toll free number with current information on training schedules in the LUA and area closures in the LUA and Fort Polk WMA; copies of notices from local newspapers and directory services listing.
- *Implementation:* Range Control – Regularly update hunting/recreation hotline. Retain copies of LUA training maps and WMA hunting maps. Public Affairs Office (PAO) – List Information Line in Fort Polk, Vernon and Beauregard Parish telephone directories; periodically publish Information Line info in local papers. Retain records of directory listings and newspaper releases/ads.



- *Status:* Fort Polk's toll free hunting information line (1-888-718-3029) was operational during this reporting period and was published in state hunting guides, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries website, the JRTC and Fort Polk website, and other media. Fort Polk is currently working to establish a toll free line to provide information on training schedules in the LUA. Construction of modernized Range Control facilities is in progress and will provide additional telecommunications line capacity needed for this toll free service. Until this service is available, individuals may contact Range Control at (337) 531-5445 or the Deputy District Ranger at (337) 531-6155 for information on military training schedules in the LUA.
- *Recommended Action:* Begin operation of toll free line for information on LUA training schedules and publish the number in appropriate media during the next reporting period.

C. World Wide Web Page (Monitoring Item No. 5)

- *Compliance Question:* Is information available on Fort Polk's web page (www.jrtc-polk.army.mil) identifying areas open to the public for hunting and other activities on the Fort Polk WMA and the LUA?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Up-to-date web page identifying training schedules in the LUA and area closures in the LUA and Fort Polk WMA.
- *Implementation:* PAO – Regularly update hunting/recreation web page to reflect current training schedules, areas open to the public (co-use), and area closures in the LUA. Range Division – Periodically check accuracy/completeness of web page, report discrepancies to PAO, and record.
- *Status:* Fort Polk's website for hunting information was operational during this reporting period. Fort Polk is currently developing a web-based automated mapping system. The system will post maps to a website for display of military training schedules in the LUA and will produce hardcopy maps for posting on information kiosks in the LUA. The system will improve the accuracy and consistency of maps and make production more efficient. The target date for availability of the website and mapping system is September 2002.
- *Recommended Action:* Begin operation of website for information on military training schedules in the LUA during the next reporting period. Re-assign primary responsibility for operation and maintenance of the website from PAO to Range Control and the Directorate of Information Management.

D. Fort Polk Complaint Hotline (Monitoring Item No. 6)

- *Compliance Question:* Is the Fort Polk complaint hotline operational? Are damages to private property repaired/corrected by the Army?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Working complaint hotline; records of repairs for damages to private property or other corrective actions.
- *Implementation:* PAO – Maintain hotline and record complaints by category. Store records in database. Record corrective actions taken by Army and store in database.
- *Status:* The Fort Polk PAO maintained operation of the complaint hotline and database during throughout the reporting period. No complaints regarding military activities in the LUA were filed with the PAO during this reporting period.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period.

**JRTC and Fort
Polk Complaint
Hotline
(337) 531-1431**



E. 24-Hour Complaint Response (Monitoring Item No. 7)

- *Compliance Question:* Are initial responses to complaints provided within 24 hours?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Percent of complaints where initial response was provided within 24 hours of receipt. Records of time elapsed from receipt of complaint to initial response.
- *Implementation:* PAO – Record time/date complaints are received and time/date of response. Store records in database. Calculate percent of total number of complaints where initial response was provided within 24 hours.
- *Status:* Implementation of this measure is ongoing. The PAO received no complaints regarding military activities in the LUA during this reporting period.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period.

F. Forest Service Information Hotline (Monitoring Item No. 4-6)

- *Compliance Question:* Is a toll free line maintained by the Forest Service to provide information to the public regarding military training activities within the Forest?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Working toll free number with current information on training schedules in the LUA (and other military activities within the Forest, at the discretion of the Forest Service).
- *Implementation:* Forest Service – Establish and maintain toll free number to provide current information on training schedules/activities in the LUA (other military activities within the Forest optional).
- *Status:* The Forest Service is currently investigating technical requirements and options for operation of a toll free information line. Pending availability of this service, individuals may contact the Deputy District Ranger at (337) 531-6155 or Range Control at (337) 531-5445 for information on training military schedules in the LUA.
- *Recommended Action:* Determine technical feasibility of this measure, identify and implement suitable options during the next reporting period.

4.3 TRAINING AREA MAINTENANCE AND UPGRADES

A. Training Land Recovery/Rotation of Training Areas (Monitoring Item No. 12)

- *Compliance Question:* Are areas in need of rest/restoration identified and documented following training exercises (home station and JRTC)? Are training exercises scheduled to avoid areas identified as needing rest/restoration?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Maneuver damage inspection records or other records documenting areas needing rest/restoration; Range Control records designating training areas/sites as off-limits pending restoration/recovery.
- *Implementation:* Forest Service/Range Control/Directorate of Public Works (DPW) – Survey bivouac sites and other training areas in LUA at least once during each month that training is permitted. Identify sites adversely impacted by training; record site location and categorize damage according to type and severity. Report nature and extent of damage to appropriate points of contact. Record basic clean up/repair actions, date of completion and other pertinent data. ENRMD/DPW/Forest Service – Determine appropriate course of action; notify G3 and Range as needed. Conduct appropriate corrective actions in accordance with Forest Service specifications for erosion control, including use of native species when possible. Record restoration/repair



methods and rationale; retain records. G3/Range Control – Designate site/training area as off-limits to training activities for specified time period per ENRMD/DPW/Forest Service determination. Maintain records of closures and re-openings for sites/training areas.

- *Status:* During this reporting period, Range Control inspectors conducted routine inspections of LUA training scheduled for recurring military training use (29 historically approved events). No reportable maneuver damages were identified in the LUA during this time period. The Army and Forest Service are currently developing a system for tracking inspections, maneuver damages, and corrective actions in the LUA, including standardized protocols, field data collection forms, reports and software. Initial versions of this system will be operational prior to approvals for digging and other military activities with the potential for ground disturbance.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue with system development and initiate implementation during the next reporting period.

B. Maneuver Damage Inspection and Repair (Monitoring Item No. 13)

- *Compliance Question:* Is ground disturbance and other damage to Forest Service lands due to training repaired/corrected in an appropriate and timely manner? Are damaged sites repaired/restored to minimize erosion, loss of soil productivity and loss of native vegetation? Is damage to existing vegetation minimized during repair efforts, and are erosion control and reseeding efforts conducted in accordance with Forest Service specifications, including use of native species?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Maneuver damage inspection records or other documentation of areas needing repairs/corrective action; records of repairs/corrective actions taken.
- *Implementation:* Same as Monitoring Item 12.
- *Status:* See Monitoring Item 12 (Section 4.3.A.).
- *Recommended Action:* See Monitoring Item 12 (Section 4.3.A.).

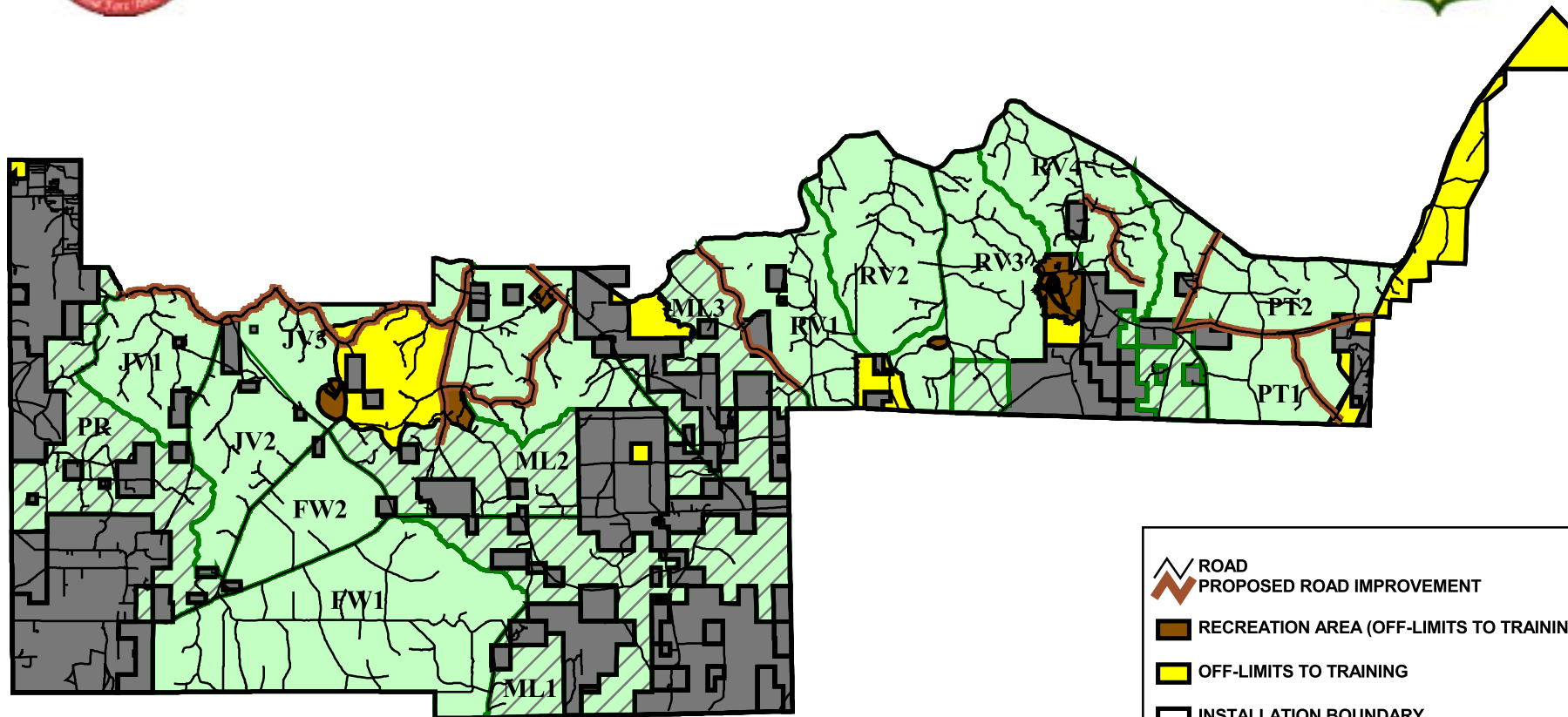
C. Upgrade of Training Roads (Monitoring Item No. 16)

- *Compliance Question:* Has the Army upgraded roads/bridges in the LUA to support increased military traffic, or is it actively planning to make such improvements?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Maps and documentation of completed road/bridge improvements; active planning documents for improvements to roads/road segments and associated facilities where severe or recurring damages have occurred or that may not be able to support expected levels of military traffic.
- *Implementation:* Forest Service/G3/Range Control/Operations Group and DPW – Jointly identify roads/bridges in the LUA for upgrade/improvement. Determine schedule for upgrade based on priority and conduct improvements. Maintain records of roads/road segment upgrades completed by the Army in LUA.
- *Status:* The Army has prepared comprehensive inventories of existing LUA roads. The inventories provide information on baseline road conditions and assist in developing priorities for improvements. Through October 1, 2001, the Army has improved approximately 11.7 miles of existing Forest Service roads in the LUA. The Army has identified an additional 24.8 miles of roads as having priority for improvement as funds become available (see Figure 4-2). Table 4-2 lists LUA roads and road segments that have been improved or are currently identified for future improvements. Figure 4-3 shows Hunter's Camp Road after resurfacing to support increased military traffic.

Recommended Action: Continue implementation of this measure during next reporting period.



**FIGURE 4-2. PROPOSED LIMITED USE AREA
ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**



-  ROAD
-  PROPOSED ROAD IMPROVEMENT
-  RECREATION AREA (OFF-LIMITS TO TRAINING)
-  OFF-LIMITS TO TRAINING
-  INSTALLATION BOUNDARY
-  TRAINING AREA BOUNDARY
- FOREST SERVICE LIMITED USE AREA
 -  ARMY OWNED LAND
 -  PRIVATE LAND
 -  LEVEL I TRAINING AREA
 - JV=JOHNSONVILLE
 - FW=FLATWOODS
 - RV=RUSTVILLE
 - PT=PITKIN
 -  LEVEL II TRAINING AREA
 - PR=PROVIDENCE
 - ML=MARLOW
 - CR=CRAVENS

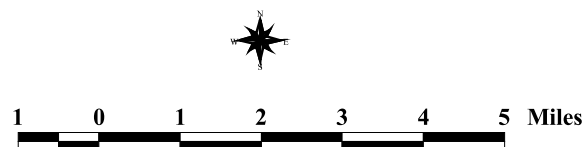




Table 4-2. LUA Road Improvement Projects

Road No./ Name	Improvement Length (mi)	Improvement Status	Type of Improvement
FS 440 / Rustville Rd.	3.85	Completed	Resurfacing with crushed rock (glauconite)
Hunter Camp Loop	0.32	Completed	Resurfacing with crushed rock (glauconite)
FS 422 / West Boundary Rd.	3.3	Completed	Resurfacing with crushed rock (glauconite)
FS 471	1.80	Completed	Resurfacing with crushed rock (glauconite)
FS 400 / Preacher James Rd.	2.40	Completed	Resurfacing with crushed rock (glauconite)
FS 444	2.75	Planned	Resurfacing and drainage improvements
FS 421 (east) / Tank Trail	3.35	Planned	Resurfacing, drainage and bridge improvements
FS 416A	0.35	Planned	Resurfacing and drainage improvements
FS 443 / Tower Rd.	0.75	Planned	Resurfacing and drainage improvements
FS 400 / Preacher James Rd.	3.00	Planned	Resurfacing, drainage and bridge improvements
FS 421 (west) / Tank Trail	2.50	Planned	Resurfacing and drainage improvements
FS 422 (north) / West Boundary Rd.	1.60	Planned	Resurfacing and drainage improvements
FS V31A	1.75	Planned	Resurfacing and drainage improvements
FS 418 / Gravel Hill Rd.	2.75	Planned	Resurfacing and drainage improvements
FS 449 / Fullerton Church Rd.	2.85	Planned	Resurfacing, drainage and bridge improvements
FS 426	1.70	Planned	Resurfacing and drainage improvements
FS 452	1.45	Planned	Resurfacing and drainage improvements



Figure 4-3. Hunter's Camp following resurfacing with crushed rock. Note orange bands painted around RCW cluster boundary trees.



D. Road Maintenance Agreements (Monitoring Item No. 17)

- *Compliance Question:* Are cooperative agreements in place among the Army, Forest Service and the Parish for road maintenance and repair of maneuver damage, including reimbursement by the Army?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Documentation of agreements.
- *Implementation:* Command/DPW – Develop agreements with the Forest Service and Vernon Parish officials for road maintenance and repairs of training-related damages to public roads in the LUA. Retain copy of agreement at appropriate office(s). Maintain records of repairs completed by Army (start and completion dates, costs, etc.).
- *Status:* A formal agreement among the Army, Forest Service and Vernon Parish for maintenance of LUA roads has not been established. However, based on discussions among both agencies and the Vernon Parish Police Jury, a policy has been instituted for Army repair of all military maneuver damages to LUA roads in lieu of reimbursement to the Forest Service or parish. The Army will conduct repairs to LUA roads in accordance with the Special Use Permit/Operating Plan and applicable regulations. No military damage to LUA roads was detected during the reporting period.
- *Recommended Action:* Eliminate requirement for formal road maintenance agreements beyond current Permit requirements. Allow for review of informal agreements by all parties as necessary.

E. Mark and Maintain Property Lines/Avoid Private Property (Monitoring Item No. 21)

- *Compliance Question:* Unless otherwise requested by the landowner, are property boundaries between Forest Service and private lands clearly marked on the ground as needed to alert soldiers to avoid private lands? Do maps distributed to Observer Controllers (OCs), Environmental Compliance Officers (ECOs) and unit leaders accurately reflect private property and training area boundaries? Are boundaries recognizable in the field?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Records and/or maps documenting completion of property boundary markings, or documentation from landowner requesting that boundaries are not marked. Fort Polk maps/overlays with accurate property boundaries for LUA.
- *Implementation:* Forest Service/G3/DPW – Identify private property boundaries in the LUA to be marked based on anticipated training use and field conditions. Paint/sign boundaries and document work completed. Prepare/revise training maps to accurately reflect private property boundaries in the LUA.
- *Status:* The Forest Service has completed refurbishment of private property/land lines in the LUA. Property boundary lines were refurbished to Forest Service standards and signage was placed at appropriate intervals to indicate to soldiers the limits of training areas (see Figure 4-4). A total of 30.5 miles of property lines were marked in the Rustville and Pitkin areas, and a total of 27.5 miles were marked in the Johnsonville and Flatwoods areas.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure by inspecting property/land lines and refurbishing as needed in following reporting periods.



Figure 4-4. Tree showing LUA boundary sign and band of red paint indicating Forest Service land line.



4.4 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE TRAINING AND REGULATIONS

A. Exercise Rules of Engagement (EXROE) (Monitoring Item No. 18)

- *Compliance Question:* Do the EXROE and other applicable Range regulations reflect training restrictions and issues of concern specific to the LUA, including avoidance of private property, environmentally sensitive areas, stream crossings, restrictions on large-scale digging (e.g., vehicle positions, anti-tank ditches, berms) and observance of noise buffers?
- *Compliance Indicator:* EXROE and Range regulations (e.g., JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1) with appropriate revisions.
- *Implementation:* G3/Range Control/Operations Group – Draft revisions to Range regulations and EXROE reflecting decisions for increased use of LUA. Distribute final revisions to appropriate offices and unit commands. No ongoing requirements.
- *Status:* The Army is developing interim training guidance to address training opportunities and restrictions in the LUA as new training activities are approved on an area-by-area basis (see Section 3). The Army is also currently revising JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1, the installation's regulation governing military operations within maneuver and range areas, to address authorized training activities and restrictions within the LUA.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue use of interim training guidance and complete draft revisions to JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1 during next reporting period. Initiate revisions to JRTC EXROE pending completion of JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1.

B. Environmental Compliance Officer (ECO) Certification Course (Monitoring Item No. 19)

- *Compliance Question:* Do Fort Polk's troop environmental education courses (ECO, OC, and LUA certification) address training restrictions and issues of concern specific to the LUA, including avoidance of private property, environmentally sensitive areas, stream crossings, restrictions on large-scale digging and observance of noise buffers? Is one person per squad LUA certified for each home station unit that conducts training exercises in the LUA?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Course texts/materials addressing training restrictions and issues of concern specific to the LUA; percent of squads with at least 1 LUA certified soldier for home station units that train in the LUA.
- *Implementation:* ENRMD – Revise ECO/LUA certification course materials as needed to reflect decision for increased use. G3/ENRMD: Calculate percentage of squads for each home station unit that have one or more LUA certified soldiers. Update quarterly.
- *Status:* Fort Polk's ECO, OC and LUA certification courses have been updated to address currently approved training activities and restrictions in the LUA. During this reporting period, a total of 790 soldiers were certified to train in the LUA. Figure 4-5 shows ECO course instructors advising troops on how to recognize red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) cavity trees and on training restrictions that apply within RCW clusters.



Figure 4-5. Environmental Compliance Officer course instruction occurring at a red-cockaded woodpecker cluster site.



- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period. Develop numeric target or other appropriate indicator of success for LUA certifications.

C. Leader's Environmental Handbook (Monitoring Item No. 20)

- *Compliance Question:* Do unit leaders and soldiers receive an environmental handbook/field card regarding environmental restrictions at Fort Polk, including restrictions pertaining to the LUA?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Copies of leader's environmental handbook/soldier's field card and distribution records.
- *Implementation:* G3/Range Control /Operations Group – Distribute Leader's Environmental Handbook and Soldier's Field Cards to troops; retain records of distribution.
- *Status:* The Army is developing appropriate revisions to the Leader's Environmental Handbook and Soldier's Field Card to address new training activities in the LUA. The Army is also developing interim LUA training guidance for soldiers as new activities are phased in on a training area-by-area basis.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period.

4.5 FIRE CONTROL AND RESPONSE MEASURES

A. Fire Control and Response Measures (Monitoring Item No. 22)

- *Compliance Question:* Is use of incendiary devices suspended as needed on days of "high risk" for forest fires? Are permanent firelines installed where needed around private property boundaries in the LUA? Are such firelines vegetated with winter wheat or other appropriate annual species and regularly maintained to minimize over-growth and soil erosion?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Record of occurrence of "high risk" days and record of notification from Range to military units to suspend use of pyrotechnics. Records and/or maps documenting construction of firelines around private properties in the LUA, or documentation of assessment showing none needed. Records of seeding and maintenance of LUA firebreaks.
- *Implementation:* Fort Polk Forestry – Maintain records of "high risk" fire days. Range Control – Suspend use of pyrotechnics in the LUA on "high risk" fire days. Record notice to units of suspension and retain records. ENRMD/Forest Service – Determine private properties at risk for training related wildfires and locations where firelines are needed. Develop schedule for construction of firelines and prepare necessary approvals/environmental documents and permits. Construct firelines on Forest Service property as needed (Army funded) and prepare maps of locations. Coordinate with landowners if any clearing on private lands is recommended. Seed with winter wheat or other appropriate annual species and conduct maintenance on annual basis or as needed. Document inspection of firelines and maintenance activities.
- *Status:* The Army and Forest Service have developed a comprehensive fire prevention and response plan to minimize the risks of training related wildfires in the LUA. The plan defines a fire hazard rating system and associated restrictions on use of military pyrotechnic devices on "high risk" days; details protocols and responsibilities for responding to forest fires in the LUA; and clearly maps existing firelines, property lines, access routes and facilities. As part of the fire plan development, Army forestry and Forest Service staff conducted an analysis of fire hazards in the LUA, including evaluation of existing firelines. During this reporting period, the Army and Forest Service refurbished to standard almost 49 miles of firelines in the LUA in preparation for



use of pyrotechnics in Level 1 training areas.

Refurbishment included disking, fertilizing, seeding with seasonal grasses, and use of terracing or other erosion control measures, as needed. Table 4-3 lists the miles of firelines refurbished by training area.

- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period. Complete evaluation of fire risks and management needs in Johnsonville, Flatwoods and Pitkin training areas prior to approvals for use of pyrotechnic devices. Continue maintenance of existing firelines as needed.

Table 4-3. LUA Fireline Refurbishment.

Training Area	Fireline Refurbishment (miles)
Johnsonville	6.65
Flatwoods	10.40
Rustville	11.36
Pitkin	7.19
Providence	4.30
Marlow	4.60
Cravens	4.38

4.6 RED-CKOADED WOODPECKER MANAGEMENT

A. Forest Service RCW Management Guidelines (Monitoring Item No. 24)

- *Compliance Question:* Is the RCW population of the Vernon Unit managed in accordance with the guidelines established in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Management of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker and Its Habitat on National Forest in the Southern Region (US Forest Service, 1995) and the Kisatchie's 1999 Revised Forest Plan?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determination.
- *Implementation:* Forest Service/USFWS – Assess Forest Service management practices for compliance with ROD for RCW FEIS and Forest Plan management direction.
- *Status:* Management of the RCW population of the Vernon Unit proceeded in accordance with the ROD for the referenced above and Revised Forest Plan direction.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue current management direction.

B. Assist with RCW Management (Monitoring Item No. 25)

- *Compliance Question:* Have RCW cluster boundaries and cavity trees been painted and/or signed? Has brush within clusters been removed? Have cavity trees and/or cluster boundaries been marked with reflective material?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Documentation showing completion of cluster boundary and cavity tree painting/signing and brush removal.
- *Implementation:* Forest Service – Identify trees to be painted/signed. ENRMD – Remove brush/midstory within designated clusters (LUA and Intensive Use Area [IUA]). Paint and sign trees. Record completion of work. Repeat on 3 year rotating cycle.
- *Status:* The Army has completed initial management requirements for all RCW clusters (active, inactive and recruitment clusters) in the LUA and the IUA in accordance with Forest Service standards. Management actions included removal of fuel material within 15 feet of cavity trees, painting of white bands around cavity trees and orange bands around cluster boundary trees, and placement of signs and reflectors on boundary trees. Figure 4-6 shows representative RCW clusters in the LUA following maintenance.



Figure 4-6. RCW clusters following maintenance. Cavity tree (left) is painted with a white band, and combustible material near the base of the tree has been removed. Cluster boundary tree (right) is painted with an orange band and marked with reflective signage indicating restrictions.

- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure in the next reporting period to maintain condition of RCW clusters to standard.

C. Mapping of RCW Clusters (Monitoring Item No. 26)

- *Compliance Question:* Are all known RCW clusters in the LUA digitally mapped using a global positioning system (GPS)?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Documentation showing completion of cluster GPSing and digital map of clusters.
- *Implementation:* ENRMD – GPS cavity trees and record activity status (active/inactive). Produce digital map of trees and activity status. Document completion of work.
- *Status:* In cooperation with the Forest Service, the Army has completed mapping of all RCW clusters in the LUA and IUA. Cavity tree locations were determined using real-time corrected GPS position estimates, accurate to within <10 meters. Cavity tree attributes, including tree condition and activity status, were collected by qualified RCW biologists. Tree location data were converted to a geographic information system (GIS) layer, and a map of the cluster boundary was created. Tree and cavity attribute data, originally collected on paper field data sheets, were also entered into the Vernon Unit RCW database.
- *Recommended Action:* Requirements for this monitoring item have been fulfilled. No additional actions are recommended for the next reporting period.

D. Access for RCW Management Activities (Monitoring Item No. 27)

- *Compliance Question:* Has a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) been developed for Forest Service access to training areas for banding of RCW nestlings and augmentation/translocation activities?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Copy of SOP or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).
- *Implementation:* G3/Forest Service MLO – Prepare SOP/MOA for Forest Service access to the Vernon. Distribute and retain copies.



- *Status:* An MOA outlining procedures for Forest Service access within JRTC and Fort Polk training areas for RCW and other management needs was signed in February 1999 and included in the Final LUA EA (Appendix K). This MOA is still in effect.
- *Recommended Action:* No additional actions are recommended for the next reporting period.

E. RCW Database (Monitoring Item No. 4-4)

- *Compliance Question:* Are Fort Polk and the Forest Service using a common database system to collect, record, store and report equivalent demographic and management data for the Vernon-Fort Polk RCW population? Are RCW monitoring, demographic and management data collected by both agencies in a uniform manner, and are those data routinely exchanged in digital format for RCW clusters located in the IUA and the LUA according to an established frequency and protocol?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Analogous Army and Forest Service records/reports on RCW demographics and management actions and protocol/agreement for exchange of demographic data between Army and Forest Service. See Joint Monitoring Plan for the Vernon-Fort Polk Red-cockaded Woodpecker Population (measure BO-3).
- *Implementation:* Forest Service – Adopt RCW DataMax[®] System for Vernon Unit. Enter historic data into database and validate. Implement monitoring practices consistent with Joint Monitoring Plan for Vernon-Fort Polk RCW population approved by USFWS. Forest Service/ENRMD – Develop agreement and protocol for exchange, review and analysis of RCW population data for Vernon-Fort Polk population in accordance with USFWS approved plan.
- *Status:* As of May 2001, Fort Polk and the Vernon Unit began using a common system for the collection, storage, analysis and reporting of RCW biological and management activity data (Figure 4-7). Use of the common system enhances the compatibility of both agencies' data and facilitates data sharing. The system exceeds the USFWS data collection and reporting requirements and provides biologists with the information they need to help meet recovery goals. The system also generates the USFWS's annual RCW report and the information required under the Joint Monitoring Plan (see monitoring item no. BO-3).
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during next reporting period.

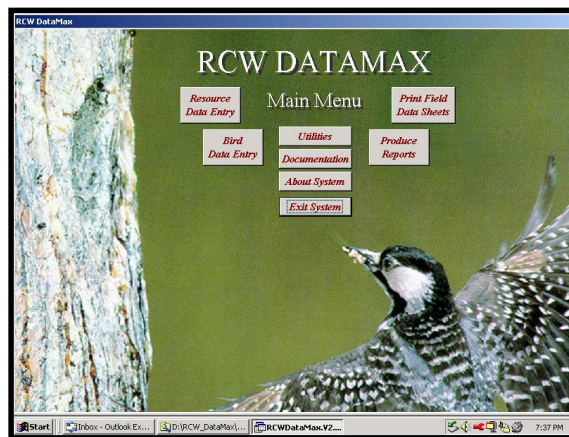


Figure 4-7. RCW DataMax system for red-cockaded woodpecker biological and management data.

F. Sign Access Roads to RCW Clusters (Monitoring Item No. BO-2)

- *Compliance Question:* Are unimproved roads in the LUA that lead into and dead-end at RCW clusters, as identified in the Forest Service Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BA/BE), closed to military training? Are such roads monitored monthly for evidence of military activity? Are permanent structures in place to block military traffic where signage has been ineffective?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Record of placement of appropriate signage at unimproved roads specified in BA/BE. Monthly monitoring records indicating evidence of military activity. Where signs have not been effective, record of construction of permanent structures blocking military traffic within cluster(s).



- *Implementation:* DPW/ENRMD/Forest Service – Identify unimproved roads needing signage per BA/BE. Mark designated roads with signs prior to entering the cluster boundary. Locate signs where the restricted roads branch off from the main road, unless local terrain conditions make placing the signs elsewhere more effective. Monitor those roads on a monthly basis for evidence of military activity. If there is evidence that the signs are not effective, erect permanent structures such as gates or fences. In no case should signs, gates or any other structures restricting access be located closer than 100 feet from the cluster boundary.
- *Status:* Army and Forest Service biologists have completed a joint evaluation of RCW clusters identified in the BA/BE as “remote”, i.e., removed from a well-established road. Signs restricting military vehicles have been installed on access roads to clusters that met this definition, as appropriate based on field conditions.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during next reporting period. Initiate monitoring of remote RCW clusters for military activity and evaluate need for additional management actions.

G. Joint RCW Monitoring Plan (Monitoring Item No. BO-3)

- *Compliance Question:* Have the Army and Forest Service prepared a joint monitoring plan for the Vernon-Fort Polk RCW population, including protocols for documenting training violations pertaining to the RCW? Has the plan been approved by the USFWS? Are the Army and the Forest Service jointly executing the plan?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Finalized Joint Monitoring Plan for the Vernon-Fort Polk Red-cockaded Woodpecker Population. Record of approval by USFWS. Records of training violations pertinent to the RCW, if any. Quarterly and annual reports as specified in the plan.
- *Implementation:* ENRMD/Forest Service – Finalize joint RCW monitoring plan. Conduct monitoring and reporting practices as specified in the plan.
- *Status:* The Final Joint Monitoring Plan was completed and approved by the USFWS in November 2000. The Plan is designed to evaluate the impacts of the Army’s increased training use of the LUA on the Vernon-Fort Polk RCW population. Joint monitoring by the Army and Forest Service is designed to ensure collection of quantitative data that can be used in the future to answer three basic questions:
 - What is the trend in the Vernon-Fort Polk RCW population, and is the population maintaining its viability through time?
 - What is the overall effect of military training on the population? and
 - Has initial exposure to increased military training in the LUA reduced viability of “remote” clusters?

Data collected under the Plan began in the 2000 pre-breeding season and is scheduled to continue for five years after initiation of increased use of the LUA. At the end of the five year term, the need to continue Plan monitoring will be evaluated.

- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during next reporting period.

H. Cooperative RCW Population Management (Monitoring Item No. BO-4)

- *Compliance Question:* Are the Army and Forest Service promoting cooperative management of the Vernon-Fort Polk RCW population through the use of a joint database and monitoring system?
- *Compliance Indicator:* See Monitoring Item No. 4-4 (4.5.E. above).



- *Implementation:* See Monitoring Item No. 4-4 above (4.5.E. above).
- *Status:* See Monitoring Item No. 4-4 (4.5.E. above).
- *Recommended Action:* See Monitoring Item No. 4-4 (4.5.E. above).

I. Fall Start of Increased Use (Monitoring Item No. BO-1)

- *Compliance Question:* Was the start of increased use of the LUA initiated in the fall of the year to allow RCWs to acclimate to increased disturbance outside of the nesting season?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Range or other records of scheduling of six new activities in LUA or scheduling of recurrent activities in new areas in LUA.
- *Implementation:* Command/G3/Operations Group – Schedule start of increased use of LUA in fall of year.
- *Status:* Increased use of the LUA began as of October 1, 2001 with approval of new Level 1 and Level 2 training areas. The use of pyrotechnic devices and artillery simulators in the Rustville 2 and 3 training areas was also permitted as of October 1, 2001. Section 3 contains additional information on the schedule for implementing increased training use.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue RCW monitoring in accordance with the Joint Monitoring Plan (see monitoring items 4-4 and BO-3 above), including evaluation of military activity in and near remote clusters (see monitoring item BO-2 above).

4.7 AREAS OFF-LIMITS TO MILITARY TRAINING

A. Sensitive Area Markings (Monitoring Item No. 28)

- *Compliance Question:* Are environmentally sensitive areas in the LUA, including designated wetlands, hillside bogs (designated A and B quality), cultural resource sites, sensitive plant sites, wildlife food plots, and pine plantations marked on the ground as off-limits to training activities using a system identifiable to soldiers in the field during daylight and low-light conditions?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Documentation and/or maps showing sensitive sites in LUA marked as off-limits (“Carsonite” stakes or other method).
- *Implementation:* ENRMD/Forest Service – Determine protocol for identification and delineation of ecologically sensitive areas (bogs, wetlands, rare/sensitive plants). Locate and delineate bogs, wetlands, rare plant sites. Mark these and other designated sensitive sites (protected cultural resource sites, wildlife food plots, pine plantations) on the ground as off-limits to training activities as appropriate. Collect GPS locations and prepare digital map and overlay of marked sites. Document actions and retain records.
- *Status:* **Bogs** – In cooperation with the Forest Service, the Army has completed delineation of wetland bogs and seeps in the LUA. Bogs and seeps were located in the field using existing location data and aerial photography. The boundaries of the bogs and seeps were delineated based on noticeable changes in vegetation types along the transitional zone between wetland and upland communities, and their locations determined using GPS. The bogs were also marked using orange delineator posts (“Carsonite” stakes) placed 50 to 100 feet from the bog’s boundary depending on vegetation density and topography. These posts were labeled with reflective “no driving” and “no digging” decals (see Figure 4-8). Once a bog was delineated and marked, the immediate area was surveyed for additional bogs. A total of 122 wetland bogs with a combined area of approximately 379 acres were delineated and located with GPS. Bog location data were converted to a GIS layer for mapping.



Cultural Resource Sites – In cooperation with the Forest Service, the Army is conducting Level 1 cultural resource surveys and Level 2 site testing in the LUA (see monitoring item 35 [item 4.7.G.] below). Sites that are eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places are protected by marking their boundaries with orange posts (“Carsonite” stakes with reflective “no digging” and “no vehicle” decals). As of this reporting period, 26 sites were marked for protection until Level 2 testing can be conducted to determine their significance. The location of protected sites was then determined using GPS and mapping using a GIS.

- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure as needed in the next reporting period. Monitor protected sites and maintain “off-limits” signage.

B. Natural Registry Areas Off-Limits (Monitoring Item No. 29)

- *Compliance Question:* Do appropriate Range regulations and EXROE prohibit military vehicle and foot traffic within state Natural Registry Areas in the LUA (Cooter's Bog, Leo's Bog and Drake's Creek Area)?
- *Compliance Indicator:* EXROE and Range regulations (e.g., JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1) with appropriate revisions.
- *Implementation:* G3/Range Control/Operations Group – Draft revisions to Range regulations and EXROE designating Registry Areas as off-limits. Distribute final revisions to appropriate offices and unit commands. ENRMD/Forest Service – Delineate bounds of Registry Areas and mark with signs as needed.
- *Status:* Natural Registry Areas in the LUA are located within areas designated as off-limits to military training (see Figure 2-1). Revisions to JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1 are in progress; the regulation will identify areas off-limits to training, including the Natural Registry Areas and other environmentally sensitive sites. Appropriate revisions to the EXROE will be undertaken pending completion of revisions to JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of monitoring item no. 18 (item 4.4A. above).

C. Recreation Complexes Off-Limits (Monitoring Item No. 30)

- *Compliance Question:* Do appropriate Range regulations and EXROE prohibit training activities at Little Cypress, Fullerton Lake, Enduro Camp and Government Pond recreational areas?
- *Compliance Indicator:* EXROE and Range regulations (e.g., JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1) with appropriate revisions.
- *Implementation:* G3/Range Control/Operations Group – Draft revisions to Range regulations and EXROE designating developed recreation areas as off-limits. Distribute final revisions to appropriate offices and unit commands. ENRMD/Forest Service – Mark entry points to developed recreation areas with “Off-limits to Training” signs as needed.
- *Status:* The Little Cypress Pond and Recreation Area and the Fullerton Recreation Area and Historic Mill site are located within areas designated as off-limits to military use (see Figure 2-1). These areas as well as Government Pond and the Enduro Camp site will be identified as off-limits in the revised installation Range regulations and the JRTC EXROE (see monitoring item no. 29 above). The Forest Service is currently evaluating the need for signage to protect these areas.



Figure 4-8. Posts with reflective decals are used to mark sensitive sites as off-limits to military activities.



- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of monitoring item no. 18 (item 4.4A. above). Based on evaluation of need, place signage at entrances and/or perimeters of recreation areas to alert military troops to avoid these areas.

D. Protect Fullerton Mill Historic Site (Monitoring Item No. 31)

- *Compliance Question:* Are signs installed around the Fullerton Historic Mill Site as needed to alert soldiers to avoid protected cultural resources?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Documentation of sign installation and/or survey report indicating none needed.
- *Implementation:* ENRMD/Forest Service – Evaluate need for signage around perimeter of Fullerton Mill site. Place signs as needed and document completion of work, or document evaluation results stating no signs needed.
- *Status:* The Forest Service is currently evaluating the need for signage to protect the Fullerton Historic Mill Site.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period.

E. Avoid Pipeline/Utility Lines (Monitoring Item No. 39)

- *Compliance Question:* Are pipelines, utility corridors or other special use easements in the LUA identified in installation regulations, on training maps and on the ground as off-limits to digging? Are designated crossing sites identified?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Range regulations and maps showing location of pipelines, utility corridors and other easements off-limits to digging.
- *Implementation:* DPW – Identify and map off-limits pipelines and other easements in the LUA. Place "Off-Limits" signs as needed along off-limits easements. G3/Range Control/Operations Group – Draft revisions to Range regulations and EXROE restricting crossing of pipelines/utility lines in the LUA by military vehicles. Distribute to appropriate offices and unit commands.
- *Status:* A major natural gas pipeline extends north-south through the Rustville training area. Several other pipelines and utility lines also occur in the LUA; these are primarily located along existing road rights-of-way. The Army and Forest Service are currently evaluating requirements for pipeline crossing points. Restrictions on digging and crossing by military vehicles except at designated points will be included in the revised installation Range regulation and EXROE (see monitoring item no. 18). Digging and cross-country vehicle movement are not yet approved in the LUA.
- *Recommended Action:* Complete evaluation of pipeline crossing points and initiate appropriate actions to protect these sites. Continue implementation of monitoring item no. 18 (item 4.4A. above). Continue to defer digging and cross-country vehicle movement pending implementation of appropriate protective measures for pipelines.

F. Hardened Stream Crossings (Monitoring Item No. 34)

- *Compliance Question:* Are designated stream crossing sites in the LUA hardened or bridged for crossing by military vehicles and troops, or are plans actively underway to harden such sites? Are methods and materials used to harden or bridge stream crossings designed to minimize impacts to water quality and aquatic systems? Are crossing sites authorized/ permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and are they designed and installed in accordance with permit conditions? Are sites affecting state scenic streams also permitted by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF, Scenic



Stream Permit), and are crossings designed in accordance with permit conditions? Are appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents available for hardening/bridging of streams in the LUA?

- *Compliance Indicator:* Design plans or other documentation for completed crossing sites. Section 404 permit/authorization for each site, plus LDWF Scenic Stream Permit for crossings on Whiskey Chitto, East Fork Sixmile and West Fort Sixmile Creeks. Completed NEPA documentation covering all stream crossing sites.
- *Implementation:* DPW/ENRMD – Prepare design plans for stream crossing sites, including alternatives (may be alternative locations and/or design options). Prepare site-specific NEPA document(s) for crossings as determined necessary by Forest Service. Obtain Section 404 permit/authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Scenic Stream Permits (if necessary) prior to construction. Finalize design plans and complete construction in accordance with NEPA decisions and permits.
- *Status:* The Army and Forest Service are jointly evaluating potential stream and wetland crossing sites in the LUA. Appropriate NEPA analyses and permit applications will be prepared once proposed crossing sites have been identified. Fort Polk is also conducting studies to evaluate the effectiveness of several hardened crossing sites previously constructed on existing training roads in the IUA and potential differences among various construction materials and designs. The studies address potential effects on aquatic life, upstream and downstream water quality and hydrology. Study results will be used in planning and design of stream crossings in the LUA to minimize effects on water quality and aquatic life. Figure 4-9 shows conditions of a stream crossing site in the IUA “before and after” hardening of the site.



Figure 4-9. *Left:* Condition of crossing point on a tributary to East Fork Six Mile Creek in the IUA before hardening in September 1998. *Right:* Condition of same crossing point in June 1999 after hardening.

- *Recommended Action:* Complete identification of proposed crossing sites and initiate appropriate environmental analyses. Continue to defer crossing of LUA streams by military vehicles during the next reporting period.

G. Cultural Resource Surveys (Monitoring Item No. 35)

- *Compliance Question:* Have Level 1 cultural resource surveys been completed in the LUA prior to conducting ground-disturbing activities under the proposed action?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Documentation and/or maps showing areas surveyed for cultural resources in LUA (must be completed prior to activities involving ground disturbance).



- *Implementation:* Forest Service/ENRMD – Complete Level 1 cultural resource surveys of the LUA. Identify sites eligible or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); test/protect sites as appropriate (Level 2 surveys). Map and document completed work.
- *Status:* Figure 4-10 illustrates the status of Level 1 cultural resource surveys in the LUA. Through the combined efforts of the Army and Forest Service, approximately 21,000 acres of the LUA (47 percent of area requiring survey) are completely surveyed. Surveys are in progress in another 10,600 acres (24 percent of area requiring survey), with approximately 11,500 acres remaining to be surveyed. As of this reporting period, a total of 119 sites eligible or potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP have been identified, and 70 of these sites have been Level 2 tested. Of these, 26 sites have been protected from disturbance by marking them as off-limits to military activities (see monitoring item 28 [item 4.7.A] above).
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during next reporting period based on available funds. Continue to defer approvals for digging, cross-country vehicle movement and other ground disturbing military activities in training areas where cultural resource surveys and appropriate site protections have not yet been completed.

4.8 AREA RESTRICTIONS

A. Restrictions on Louisiana National Guard Training (Monitoring Item No. 14)

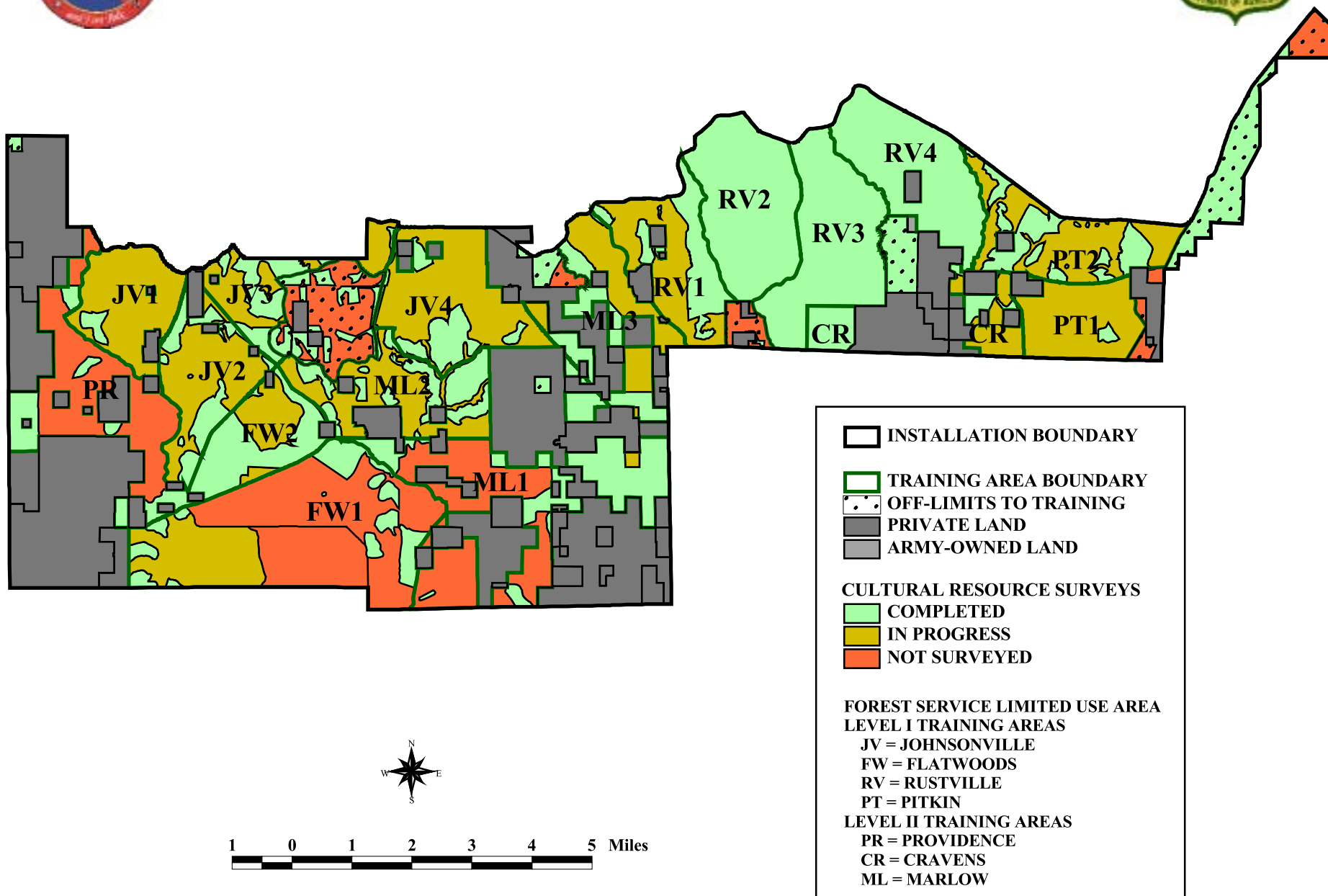
- *Compliance Question:* Is cross-country tank travel (mounted maneuvers) by the 256th Brigade of the Louisiana Army National Guard (LAARNG) restricted to the main post?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Command/G3 policy statement or installation regulation prohibiting 256th mounted maneuvers in the LUA.
- *Implementation:* Command/G3 – Issue policy statement and/or amend Range regulations to prohibit LAARNG mounted maneuvers in the LUA. Retain documentation. No ongoing requirements.
- *Status:* Fort Polk is currently revising JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1 to address training opportunities and restrictions in the LUA, including restrictions on operation of armored/tracked vehicles.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of monitoring item no. 18 (see Section 4.4.A. above).

B. Restrictions on Blackout Driving (Monitoring Item No.15)

- *Compliance Question:* During routine training exercises, is blackout driving in the LUA restricted to primitive “woods roads” within training areas closed to public access? Are special training events requiring blackout driving on roads open to the public (e.g., LA Hwy 10, Lookout Road) coordinated in advance with the Forest Service and other state and local agencies? Is appropriate advance notice given to the public? Are signs/barricades/sentries posted at training area entry and exit points as needed to alert the public of temporary access
- *Compliance Indicator:* Installation regulations, guidance documents and/or maps identifying roads/training areas in LUA where blackout driving may be conducted. Documentation of coordination/authorization from state/local agencies for blackout driving on public roads (as required by applicable laws and regulations). Documentation of public notice for temporary road closures. Optional indicator: Unit/OC field records of sign/ barricade/ sentry positions.



FIGURE 4-10. STATUS OF LIMITED USE AREA CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEYS





- *Implementation:* G3/Operations Group/Range/DPW – Identify LUA roads where blackout driving can be conducted. Produce maps of roads and distribute to troops. Revise Range regulations/EXROE as needed. Coordinate any temporary road closures in advance with Forest Service and local/state officials; retain records. Consider feasibility of requiring unit leaders/ECOs/OCs to document time and location where barricades/sentries are posted on public roads during blackout driving exercises. PAO – Publicize any temporary road closures in advance in local media and retain records.
- *Status:* The Army and Forest Service are currently evaluating roads in the LUA to identify those suitable for blackout driving. The Army is concurrently working to develop training guidance for the safe execution of this activity in the LUA. Blackout driving has not yet been approved in any LUA training areas.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure in the next reporting period. Continue to defer approval for blackout driving pending identification of appropriate routes and development of training guidance.

C. Noise Buffers (Monitoring Item No. 23)

- *Compliance Question:* Are noise buffers around potential receptors in the LUA (e.g., residences, commercial establishments, developed recreational sites, etc.) established at appropriated distances so as not to exceed recommended Day-Night Levels (DNLs) for noise? Are appropriate distances from noise receptors for specific noise-producing events incorporated into the EXROE, JRTC and Fort Polk Regulation 385-1, and/or other installation regulations governing use of training areas?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Maps, EXROE and Range regulations (e.g., JRTC and FP 385-1) with appropriate revisions for noise buffers in LUA.
- *Implementation:* ENRMD/G3/Operations Group – Develop digital map of noise buffer(s) around LUA developed recreation areas, residences, commercial establishments, churches, etc. and produce noise buffer maps/overlays for training maps. G3/Range Control/Operations Group – Draft revisions to Range regulations and EXROE reflecting decisions for LUA noise buffers. Distribute final revisions to appropriate offices and unit commands.
- *Status:* The Army has purchased a set of noise monitors and, in coordination with LUA residents, is developing a series of monitoring stations near privately owned properties. The Army is also preparing a noise management plan that will address monitoring and analysis of military noise in the LUA. Revisions to the installation's Range regulation, JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1, are also in progress (see monitoring item 18 in Section 4.4.A. above).
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period. Install noise monitors and evaluate noise buffer requirements based on noise management plan determinations.

D. Avoid Recreation Trails (Monitoring Item No. 32)

- *Compliance Question:* Are Forest Service maintained recreational trails/trail heads identified in installation regulations, training maps and on the ground as off-limits to military vehicles (vehicle crossing and pedestrian traffic only allowed)?
- *Compliance Indicator:* EXROE and Range regulations (e.g., JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1) with appropriate revisions. Documentation and maps showing location of appropriate signage at trails/trail heads.
- *Implementation:* G3/Range Control/Operations Group – Draft revisions to Range regulations and EXROE prohibiting use of Forest Service maintained trails by military vehicles. Distribute



final revisions to appropriate offices and unit commands. Forest Service/ENRMD – GPS trails and produce digital map. Mark trail heads/entry points with "Off-limits to Training" signs as needed.

- *Status:* The Forest Service is evaluating the need for signage at trail heads to restrict military vehicles. The Army is also in the process of revising JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1 to address authorized training activities and restrictions in the LUA (see monitoring item no. 18 in Section 4.4.A above). Revisions to JRTC EXROE will be initiated pending completion of JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during next reporting period. Continue to defer cross-country movement of military vehicles pending determination of resource protection needs and development of appropriate training guidance.

E. Avoid School Bus Routes (Monitoring Item No. 37)

- *Compliance Question:* Are military convoys scheduled and routed so as not to interfere with school buses during the school year?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Map or list of school bus routes and associated guidance/ documentation directing military convoys to use other routes during busing schedules.
- *Implementation:* *Command/G3/Operations Group* – Issue policy statement and/or amend Range regulations to restrict military convoys along school bus routes during the school year. Obtain schedules and maps from parish or school districts and distribute to appropriate offices and unit commands. Update maps, schedules and/or policy on annual basis and retain documentation.
- *Status:* The Army has coordinated with local school boards regarding bus routes in the LUA. All public roads in the LUA are potential school bus routes. The Army is providing direction to soldiers on appropriate interactions with civilians in the LUA certification course and other training guidance. The Army is also evaluating other policies to minimize the potential for conflicts between military convoys and school buses in the LUA.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period. Determine whether or not revisions to Fort Polk vehicle convoy regulations or installation training policies are necessary.

F. Avoid Pasture Fences (Monitoring Item No. 38)

- *Compliance Question:* Are fences for active grazing allotments in the LUA left in their original condition during and after training exercises? Are pasture gates left as they were found, either closed or open?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Maneuver damage inspection reports and/or records of landowner complaints regarding grazing allotments.
- *Implementation:* Forest Service – Produce digital map of fences and designate those which may be removed. G3 – Remove unneeded pasture fences in LUA, in coordination with the Forest Service and private landowners/permittees. Issue policy statement, amend Range regulations and/or amend troop educational materials to address remaining fences in LUA. PAO – Record public complaints by category. Store records in database. Record corrective actions taken by Army and store in database.
- *Status:* The Forest Service is currently evaluating the status of grazing allotments and identifying inactive pasture fences. The Army is also in the process of revising its Range regulation, JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1, to address authorized training activities and restrictions in the LUA (see



monitoring item no. 18 in Section 4.4.A above). No incidents regarding military disturbance or damages to LUA pasture fences were reported to the PAO during this reporting period.

- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure during the next reporting period. Identify fences that are no longer in service and prioritize for removal.

G. Limit Stream Crossings (Monitoring Item No. 33)

- *Compliance Question:* Do appropriate Range regulations and EXROE prohibit crossing of streams by military vehicles in the LUA except at approved designated crossings? Are designated crossing sites shown on appropriate training maps/overlays?
- *Compliance Indicator:* EXROE and Range regulations (e.g., JRTC and FP 385-1) with appropriate revisions for LUA. Training maps identifying designated stream crossing sites.
- *Implementation:* G3/Operations Group/MLO – Identify designated stream crossing sites. Revise Range regulations and EXROE as needed to prohibit military vehicle crossings at non-designated sites. DPW: Digitally map crossing sites and create overlays for training maps. DPW/ENRMD/MLO – Document evidence of stream crossings by military vehicles at non-designated locations during maneuver damage inspections (see monitoring item 12).
- *Status:* The Army and Forest Service are jointly evaluating potential stream and wetland crossing sites in the LUA. Appropriate NEPA analyses and permit applications will be prepared once proposed crossing sites have been identified. Approved crossing sites will be designated in JRTC and FP Reg. 385-1 and the JRTC EXROE; these documents will prohibit crossing of LUA streams except at designated locations.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue implementation of this measure. Continue to defer crossing of LUA streams by military vehicles during the next reporting period.

H. Multiple Use Trail (Monitoring Item No. 4-5)

- *Compliance Question:* Has an existing recreational trail in the west half of the LUA been re-designated as a multiple use trail?
- *Compliance Indicator:* Decision notice/other documentation identifying proposal to change trail classification.
- *Implementation:* Forest Service – Propose reclassification of recreational trail on west side of LUA for multi-use (all-terrain/off-road vehicles permitted). Replace trailhead markers and revise District maps as needed.
- *Status:* The LUA EA Decision Notice signed by the Forest Supervisor on September 22, 2000, approved the reclassification of the Big Branch Trail on the west side of the LUA to allow motorized travel. The Forest Service is currently evaluating resource management needs and requirements prior to implementation of this decision.
- *Recommended Action:* During the next reporting period, determine resource management needs and requirements to allow motorized travel on the Big Branch Trail.

4.10 SITE LEVEL MONITORING PLAN

A. Monitoring Plan (Monitoring Item No. 4-2)

- *Compliance Question:* Is compliance and effectiveness monitoring conducted according to plan? Are monitoring results recorded and maintained as necessary to assess compliance and



effectiveness? Are monitoring results made available to other agencies, organizations and the public on an annual basis?

- *Compliance Indicator:* Published annual summary of monitoring practices and results and proceedings/records of public meetings, as applicable. Records of consultation with other agencies regarding monitoring results, where applicable.
- *Implementation:* ENRMD/Forest Service – Publish results of monitoring annually. Make results available to the public (methods may include direct distribution, internet publishing, availability by request, etc.). Command/PAO/Forest Service – Based on public interest, hold public meetings to disclose results of monitoring and receive feedback from the public. Advertise public meeting and document proceedings.
- *Status:* This document constitutes the first annual Compliance and Effectiveness Monitoring (CEM) report for the LUA. This report includes compliance monitoring results current from September 22, 2000 – September 30, 2002. It also documents the status of approvals for six new LUA training activities at the time of report preparation. Because implementation of increased military training is in the early stages of implementation and approvals for new training activities began at the close of the current reporting period, this CEM report does not include effectiveness monitoring results. Copies of this report are available on line at the JRTC and Fort Polk website (www.jrtc-polk.army.mil/generalinfo.asp) and by request from the JRTC and Fort Polk PAO at 7073 Radio Road, Fort Polk, Louisiana, 71459-5342, (337) 531-7203, or e-mail to nanced@polk.army.mil.
- *Recommended Action:* Continue to develop standardized CEM protocols and record-keeping practices. Continue compliance monitoring and initiate effectiveness monitoring during next reporting period and publish results for public review. Evaluate procedures for internal Army and Forest Service review and analysis of CEM results.

5. Fiscal Year 2002 Action Plan

This section summarizes procedures, goals and objectives for the next reporting period, Fiscal Year 2002 (FY02; October 1, 2001 through September 30, 2002), and outlines agency responsibilities.

A. Joint Army and Forest Service Quarterly In-Progress Review

- *Action:* Review status of monitoring items and recommendations in the third and fourth quarters of FY02.
- *Indicator:* Progress shown for individual monitoring items.
- *Responsibilities:* Joint review by JRTC and Fort Polk Environmental Quality Control Council (EQCC) and Command Group; and Forest Service Deputy District Ranger, Forest Ecosystem Assessment/Planning Team Leader and Forest Supervisor.

B. Funding Requirements

- *Action:* Develop and validate funding requirements for FY03 to support initial (start-up) and recurring mitigation and monitoring needs.
- *Indicator:* Funding requests and issue sheets.
- *Responsibilities:* Combat Training Center and Directorate of Resource Management prepare issue sheets in coordination with ENRMD. Forest Service provide supporting information as needed.



C. Implementation of New Training Activities

- *Action:* Review schedules for approval of new LUA training activities on a quarterly basis or more frequently as needed. Adjust schedules and issue approvals for new activities based on the status of mitigation and monitoring requirements.
- *Indicator:* Number of new training activities implemented on schedule.
- *Responsibilities:* Joint review by G3/Training, ENRMD and Forest Service. Approvals for new activities issued under joint signature of Forest Service Deputy District Ranger and Chief, ENRMD.

D. Effectiveness Monitoring

- *Action:* Initiate effectiveness monitoring practices and recordkeeping.
- *Indicator:* Results for individual monitoring items.
- *Responsibilities:* Army and Forest Service staff (various).

E. Training Area Closure Calendar

- *Action:* Develop proposed LUA training area closure calendar to allow closed “maneuver box” for JRTC rotations occurring in FY03 in accordance with the LUA EA and Special Use Permit/Operating Plan for the LUA. Make the area closure calendar available to the public.
- *Indicator:* Forest Supervisor’s Order identifying schedule of LUA training area closures for JRTC rotations.
- *Responsibilities:* JRTC Operations Group develop proposed closure calendar for Forest Service review. Forest Service review and process Supervisor’s Order for closures.

6. Acronyms

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Definition</u>
BA/BE	Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation
BO	Biological Opinion
CEM	Compliance and Effectiveness Monitoring
DNL	Day-Night Level
DPW	Directorate of Public Works
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECO	Environmental Compliance Officer
ENRMD	Environmental and Natural Resources Management Division
EQCC	Environmental Quality Control Council
EXROE	Exercise Rules Of Engagement
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FP	Fort Polk
FY	Fiscal Year
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IUA	Intensive Use Area
JRTC	Joint Readiness Training Center
LAARNG	Louisiana Army National Guard
LDWF	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
LUA	Limited Use Area



MLO	Military Liaison Officer
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
OC	Observer Controller
PAO	Public Affairs Office
RAC	Resource Allocation Conference
RCW	Red-Cockaded Woodpecker
ROD	Record of Decision
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
U.S.D.A.	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WMA	Wildlife Management Area



Appendices



Appendix A

DESCRIPTION OF SIX NEW LIMITED USE AREA TRAINING ACTIVITIES

- **Cross-country vehicle maneuvers.** This activity would involve off-road movement of limited numbers of tracked or wheeled vehicles. Off-road vehicle movement would consist primarily of movement for short distances from assembly areas and other fixed areas of operation in upland areas to nearby improved roads. Unimproved Forest Service roads would also be used for cross-country movement. Occasional stream crossings would occur at designated hardened crossing sites.
- **Blackout driving.** Blackout driving would be conducted primarily on unimproved Forest Service roads. Cross-country driving under blackout conditions would occasionally be required for tactical purposes. However, military vehicles would typically be road bound at night due the difficulty of maneuvering off-road under blackout conditions.
- **Use of pyrotechnics and artillery simulation devices.** This activity would involve limited use of various devices to simulate direct and indirect artillery fire, use of smoke and obscurants, and flares. These devices would be used only by Officers in Charge, Non-Commissioned Officers in Charge, and specially trained personnel know as "firemarkers."
- **Construction of hasty/limited defensive positions.** Hasty or limited defensive positions, commonly known as foxholes, would be constructed in upland areas. These positions would typically consist of shallow holes (up to 12 inches deep) to provide protection for a single individual. Larger two-man excavations would also be constructed for concealment and firing of crew-served weapons. These positions would primarily be constructed around fixed areas of operation such as bivouac/assembly areas, tactical operations centers, and forward/rear support areas and/or field hospitals. All excavations would be filled in at the close of the training exercise.
- **Emplacement of obstacles.** Concertina or barbed wire would be strung at intersections of unimproved Forest Service roads, around defensive positions, and at checkpoints and entrances to fixed areas of operation. Simulated mines consisting of inert material would be buried just beneath the ground surface or scattered along improved Forest Service roads and around fixed operation sites. All wire and simulated mines would be removed at the close of the training exercise.
- **Establishment of forward/rear support areas and/or field hospitals.** This activity would be similar to bivouacking/establishment of troop assembly areas (activity no. 19), but would allow expanded operations such as field hospitals which have not been previously conducted in the LUA. Operations conducted under this activity would be primarily for combat support rather than tactical purposes.



Appendix B

LIST OF 29 HISTORICALLY APPROVED LIMITED USE AREA TRAINING EVENTS

1. Mounted and/or dismounted land navigation
2. Helicopter landing and refueling sites (no arming)
3. Airborne operations, no live ordnance
4. Helicopter air landing and removal of personnel and equipment
5. Dismounted patrolling
6. Mounted patrolling (including bridge classification)
7. Mounted and dismounted road marching
8. Assembly area bivouac training
9. Simulated chemical training
10. Escape and evasion
11. Mass casualty evacuation
12. Helicopter sling loading operations
13. Field Training Exercises (FTX)
14. Military Intelligence FTX
15. Command Post Exercises (CPX)
16. Communication FTX
17. Special Operation Forces (SOF) training operations and recovery missions
18. Survival training
19. Tracked command vehicle positioned at stationary location during exercise
20. First aid and litter carrying exercise
21. Tactical exercise without troops (TEWT)
22. Leader stakes
23. Squad raid exercises
24. Combat search and rescue exercises
25. Helicopter aeroscout testing-air recon simulated threat training
26. External evaluations
27. Aviation tasks
28. Scout stakes
29. Convoy supply training

